

CONFIDENTIAL

15 May 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ESTIMATES

FROM: Acting Chief, Estimates Staff

SUBJECT: Coordination of National Estimates

1. The present method of coordinating National Estimates with the agencies has besides its advantages some fairly well-recognized shortcomings:

(a) The members of the Board frequently have to spend an inordinate amount of time discussing minor matters of substance or phraseology with working-level people from the agencies;

(b) Various changes and clarifications, on the necessity of which everybody agrees, have to be incorporated into the Estimate during meetings, and the attempt to do this job in a hurry is not always successful;

(c) The Board is sometimes confronted with unexpected major objections, which are difficult to deal with conclusively in the course of meeting with IAC representatives.

2. I have been wondering whether the Staff could in some way relieve the Board of a part of the routine of coordination. The suggested procedure outlined below has been discussed with one or two of the Board and Staff members, and met with enough assent to make it seem worth submitting to you, as an experiment which might be worth trying. Essentially it is this: that on many (not all) Estimates, a preliminary, exploratory meeting be held between Estimates Staff members and IAC representatives, before the Board has fully committed itself to the draft of a paper.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

3. In more detail, the procedure would be as follows:

(a) The Staff would draft a paper as at present, and obtain the general approval of the Board -- i.e., the Board would ascertain that no important matters were omitted, and no wrong slants adopted. Perhaps this could be done sufficiently by the two Board members particularly associated with the paper.

(b) A preliminary meeting would then be held between members of the Estimates Staff Task Team and the IAC representatives, with the Chief of the Estimates Staff presiding. Board members would of course be present if they wished to be, but would have no responsibility. The object of this meeting would be, not to reach final agreement on the paper, but to get a consensus of opinion on difficult points, to solve as many as possible of the minor problems of the paper, and to get a clear understanding of the basic disagreements, if any, which appeared. It would be the duty of the Chairman to see that the entire paper was gone through in one meeting.

(c) The Staff, consulting with the two Board members concerned, would then redraft the paper as far as appeared necessary and desirable in the light of the IAC representatives' discussion, and present it to the Board for detailed approval (as at present). At this time it would be possible to brief the Board on major difficulties to be anticipated with the agencies.

(d) Proceed then to the meetings with IAC representatives as now held, for the purpose of agreeing on the paper which is to be submitted to the IAC. Perhaps it could be established that only senior members from the IAC agencies should attend this meeting.

4. If such a procedure worked out well, it ought to have the following advantages:

(a) It would give the opportunity for careful and unhurried redrafting of those portions of the Estimate which, though substantially agreed among all parties, nevertheless appear to need redrafting;

- 2 -

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

(b) It would permit the Board members to discuss with agency representatives only the more important aspects of a paper;

(c) It might save the Board one or more meetings on each paper.

5. It is plain that such a scheme would not be appropriate for all National Estimates, especially those which depend primarily on the very latest indications, which the Board might wish to hear fully argued. Many "crash" estimates might also have to be done from the earliest moment with full Board participation. Finally, there are some papers which present so few difficulties that only one meeting with agency representatives seems to be required. For the general run of papers, however, it might be that such a procedure would save the Board a considerable amount of time and energy.

Abbot E. Smith

25X1

CONFIDENTIAL